



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

October 16, 1996

Dear Colleague:

The Head Start Bureau and the Office of Child Support Enforcement are engaging in an initiative to promote child support services for single-parent families in Head Start. We are sending you this jointly signed letter to tell you about the initiative and to enlist your active support in it.

As you know, Head Start offers children and their families a number of services, including education, health, nutrition and social services. Among the social services many Head Start families rely on are child support services. One-parent families across our nation depend on these critical services for their daily needs. This is why we are collaborating --here and in the Regional Offices-- to promote child support services for those Head Start parents who are not already involved in the child support enforcement system.

Why are these services so critical for them? Because child support services can provide a single-parent with much needed financial and medical support from the non-custodial parent. Child support services, therefore, provide single parents with critical additional resources to meet their children's growing material needs. In addition, child support services frequently result in a child enjoying emotional support and love from both its mother and father.

We know that, as Head Start Program Directors, you understand better than most Americans just how much single, low-income women must struggle, day in and day out, trying to make ends meet in providing food, clothing, medicine, etc., etc. for their growing children. We know, too, that you are passionately committed to children, particularly to low-income children who often have "two strikes against them" in life due to lack of services. This is why we now ask you to join us in this initiative to promote child support services for Head Start single-parent families.

Specifically, this initiative invites you to take three steps to assure that your Head Start program promotes child support services for every single-parent family in it. We know that many Head Start programs, coordinating with Child Support offices, are already carrying out one or more of these activities and we commend them. We are now asking every Head Start program to carry out the three steps on behalf of their enrolled children and families.

First, we encourage you to alert all the local IV-D offices throughout the State about this initiative and their role in it. They will need to know that Head Start program directors may be contacting them. You may wish to share our letter to the Head Start directors with the local IV-D offices so they will know exactly what the Head Start program directors will be attempting. We hope the local IV-D offices will be ready for the calls from Head Start and receive them warmly.

We also encourage you to suggest that they be ready to set up referral arrangements with the Head Start programs and offer to speak to Head Start staff and parents about child support services. In sum, we would greatly appreciate your exhorting each local IV-D office to enter into an ongoing collaborative relationship with the local Head Start program to promote child support services.

Second, Head Start program directors may contact your office to seek assistance in contacting the appropriate local Child Support Enforcement office. They may also request program material for distribution in their programs. We would appreciate your welcoming their calls and offering to assist them in the initiative. We encourage you to provide them with the name, address and telephone number of the appropriate local Child Support Enforcement office they are to contact. Please invite them to get back to you for further assistance if they have difficulty in making contact with the local Child Support office.

As we jointly invite you to take the State lead in this major initiative to promote child support services, we want to assure you --as we did the Head Start program directors-- of our joint commitment to assist your efforts. Our regional Child Support and Head Start staffs share this commitment and invite your calls on them for assistance. We are interested in showcasing in the Child Support Report best practices under this initiative which you may wish to share with us.

In closing, we thank you on behalf of the many Head Start single-parents and their children who will be strengthened by the child support services they receive through your participation in this initiative!

(for) Douglas Klefuhn
Helen H. Taylor
Associate Commissioner
Head Start Bureau

Sincerely,

David Gray Ross
David Gray Ross
Deputy Director
Office of Child Support
Enforcement

Enclosure